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December 19, 2013

The Honorable Steven Rhodes
Justice - U. S. Bankruptcy Court
Eastern District of Michigan
211 W. Fort St., Suite 1800

RE: City of Detroit Retiree Pension Benefits

Dear Judge Rhodes:

I am a City of Detroit retiree who retired in 2000 after 31 years of dedicated, loyal and professional service to the residents of the city. Moreover, I am a Vietnam veteran, a taxpayer and a voter who has missed only one primary and no general election since reaching the voting age. However, now I, like so many others, find myself in a precarious predicament as it relates to our financial future. We served the city diligently and devotedly for so many years with the expectation that we would have some degree of financial security upon retirement, as promised by the city and as guaranteed by the state constitution.

However, in light of the city's current financial situation, there are those in the media as well as those in elected and appointed offices who have now begun referring to us as "creditors." They are de-humanizing us in order to soothe their conscious and to rationalize their intended actions of taking away our safety net; something we earned that is rightfully and legally ours. But, we are not "creditors." We are people. We have other people who are dependent upon us for their well being; we have financial obligations; and we have quality of life issues that we rely on our pensions to address. We are not banks, corporations, bondholders, lien holders or mortgagors.

I say again, we are people!

Therefore, I ask you to use your judicial powers and prerogatives to encourage and require Governor Snyder and Mr. Kevyn Orr to consider that we are not corporations when the city's reorganization plan is presented and implemented. For many of us our very existence is dependent upon our monthly city pensions. Unlike businesses, we do not have the ability to make up any deficit by increasing revenues from other sources. We do not have rainy day or excess funds to sustain us. We live from paycheck to paycheck. The bottom line is, we simply cannot afford to have our pensions reduced.

I thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to read this letter and give this matter your consideration.

Sincerely,

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E.D. MICHIGAN-DETROIT